



(Photo by Maj. Raul E. Marquez, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Nathaniel Jones, a native of New Concord, Ohio, drops an elbow on Spc. Juan Garcia, a native of Brownsville, Texas, during a sumo wrestling match. Soldiers from 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd "Grey Wolf" BCT, 1st Cav. Div., enjoyed a well-deserved day of fun and relaxation at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Baqubah, Iraq.

'Blacksmith' troops spend time teambuilding

**By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

BAQUBAH, Iraq - Life around Forward Operating Base Warhorse does not always have to consist of work, work and more work and members of the "Blacksmith" Battalion were out to prove that with a company fun day, Nov. 26.

The fun day was a chance for Soldiers from Company B, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, to blow off some steam, build morale and interact with their Army

family.

"We're out here to try and build morale in our Soldiers," said 1st Sgt. Walter Barrow, Co. B first sergeant and a native of Fort Hood, Texas.

"They work so hard during the week so we try to pick a day out of the month to have special events for them," he added.

For Spc. Craig Woolever, a Soldier from Co. B and a native of Plant City, Fla., it was a chance to step away from the long hours at work and have a blast with those he calls his brothers.

"It was nice to come out here for a

company fun day," said Woolever. "It really does build morale in all the shops."

The day was full of team building events, said Woolever.

"We started out early with relay races, three-legged and will barrow races," said Barrow. "Then we had a basketball tournament where each platoon faced up against each other. We then moved on to the egg toss, tug-of-war, and after that, the pie throwing. It's been a good day of fun."

But the best event of all, said

Sumo wrestling and pie throwing

Fun

From Page 1

Woolever, was the sumo wrestling.

"The sumo wrestling was great," he said. "If we have

another event like this, I definitely want to do that again."

The Soldiers were treated with sumo wrestling outfits provided by the FOB's Morale, Welfare and Recreation center. The costumes were heavily

padded suits to resemble the body of Japanese sumo stars, complete with hair-helmets that look like hair of the wrestlers.

But with a day of fun activities like these, Barrow had to agree with Woolever, the

sumo wrestling was the most entertaining event, he said.

"The sumo wrestling is the best event," said Barrow with a big smile on his face. "You see everybody trying their best to throw each other around -- it's great. Even the little guys want to take on the bigger guys; it seems everybody thinks they have a chance with these sumo suits on."

"It's just hilarious and so fun to watch everyone get in the suits and roll around," added Woolever.

As the day drew to a close, the Soldiers relaxed, listened to music and conversed. The experience was something Woolever said he is looking forward to again.

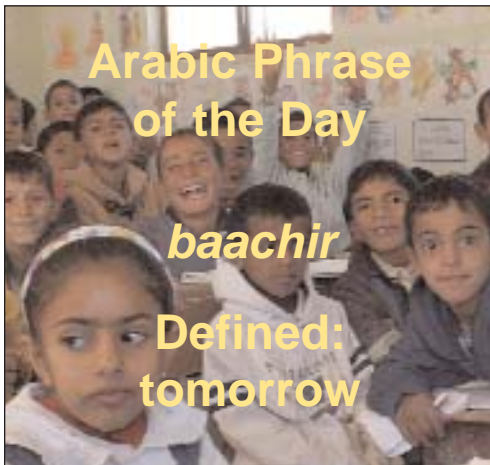
"I know everyone has different missions," said Barrow, "but if other companies could get out here and do this."

"I've seen more smiles today than I've seen in the last month."



(Photo by Maj. Raul E. Marquez, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Soldiers from Company B, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., enjoy a day of sports and relaxation, at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Baqubah, Iraq. The 'Blacksmith' Soldiers provide support and security to FOB Warhorse.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 59
Low: 41



Tomorrow

High: 64
Low: 48



Friday

High: 66
Low: 39

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr.
Public Affairs Officer: Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl
Command Information Supervisor: Master Sgt. Dave Larsen
NCOIC, Print Production: Staff Sgt. Mary Rose
Editor: Sgt. Michael Garrett
Staff Writers: Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, Spc. L.B. Edgar, Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, Pfc. Ben Gable, Pfc. Shea Butler, Pfc. William Hatton
Contributing Writers: Spc. Ryan Stroud, Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins

Contact the *Daily Charge* at VOIP 242-4093, DSN 318-847-2855 or e-mail david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil.

The *Daily Charge* is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of the *Daily Charge* are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 1st Cavalry Division. All editorial content of the *Daily Charge* is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs Office.

41 years strong**1st ACB repeats history with air assault mission**

By Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - They say history is written by the victorious. That's why for 41 years the 1st Cavalry Division has been writing the history of air assaults.

Soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, are carrying on the air assault mission, which started Nov. 14, 1965 in the Ia Drang Valley of Vietnam.

As told in the book, "We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young," and later as a feature film, it was 41 years ago when Lt. Col. Hal Moore took the grounds of Landing Zone X-Ray with Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, and started what would be the newest and most innovative way to place Soldiers on the battlefield - by helicopter.

On that same day 41 years later, aviators from 3-227th carried on the traditions of the 1st Cavalry Division's air units with their first air assault mission since hitting the grounds in Iraq. The Company A

"Werewolves" dropped off infantry Soldiers ready to carry out their mission to seek out and capture insurgents.

Some aspects of this first air assault are familiar in regards to what their predecessors faced on the grounds of LZ X-Ray, said Brunswick, Maine, native 1st Lt. Douglas Livermore, a plans officer for 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division "Polar Bears."

"We were air assaulting into an isolated and alien environment, far from possible help from our comrades. We had to rely on each other and our training to accomplish the mission and get everyone home," he said.

Livermore's words echoed those of a historic quote from Moore, on the subject of Soldiers relying on each other.

"American Soldiers in battle don't fight for what some president says on T.V., they don't fight for mom, apple pie, the American Flag ... they fight for one another," said Moore.

After being inserted into their LZ, the ground troops, a mix from 4-31st and 4th

Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, led by Iraqi Army Capt. Ibraheem Jmile Abed, would go on to clear multiple houses in the dead of night, routing any insurgents hiding in Qarghuli Village, said Capt. Christopher Sanchez, the non-lethal coordinator for 4-31st.

During the Vietnam conflict, groups the size of battalions were moved into locations to fight battles. Now units the size of companies or smaller are strategically placed to accomplish a specific mission, said Capt. Lee Evans, commander of the Werewolves.

"Air Assaults take [the air mobility concept] a little bit further ... it's more of a combined arms effort ... the element of surprise is essential," said Evans.

The speed and agility of the Black Hawk supersedes that of the Huey, and aviators now have the innovation of night vision enabling them to move stealthily towards and away from target landing zones, he said.

Although dangerous, the Polar Bears take advantage of the night insertions and are energized with their precarious mission.

"It is always exciting to fly blacked out, landing in [an] area known not to be safe and watching your ride fly away," said Maj. Robert Griggs, the 4-31st operations officer.

With an impressive history and lineage behind them, Soldiers of 3-227th feel they have done well in honoring the memory of those who came before them, said Evans.

"In trying to uphold that lineage, if they could have seen what happened over here on the 14th of November, I think they would've been proud that we were able to accomplish the mission in the manner that we did," he said.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Emmanuel Vero, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot, 3-227th said, "we did well on making the LZ that night, but honestly, the only standard that we can be held to is that everyone got in there safely and everyone got out of there safely and those are the numbers we really care about."



(Photo by Capt. Christopher Sanchez, 4-31st, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.)

Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division go through training and dry runs before their air assault mission.

Cav Soldier's wait worth little 'Ray Ray' of sunshine

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - When she was born, he was away taking the career counseling course. On her first birthday, he was deployed to Iraq. Now he's back in the Middle East, missing her third.

Sgt. 1st Class Rex Fortner, a retention noncommissioned officer with Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division, signed a reenlistment contract and pinned on more rank with his family present via a video teleconference call on his youngest daughter Raychel's third birthday, Nov. 27.

"We call her 'Ray Ray' because she's like a little ray of sunshine. She has the type of personality and a smile to match that when she walks into a room she just brightens the whole place up," Fortner said with a laugh.

Fortner said while the rest of his unit deployed north to Baghdad, he was one of two people who stayed behind manning a retention cell had set up

in Kuwait.

Although he was supposed to be promoted there, his unit wanted to wait until he got to Iraq because they planned to promote him in a big way.

"They were thinking we [could] do [it at] the castle or under the arches in the Green Zone," Fortner said. While waiting to set foot in Iraq, his promotion was delayed. "If I had to wait that long, I'd rather wait until the 27th and do a VTC so I could see my youngest daughter for her third birthday," the native of Converse, Texas said.

"It meant the world to me to have my family here in a sense," Fortner tearfully said. "My wife is my best friend, and my kids are the two most important things in the world to me.

"It was a nice treat to be able to see her and say 'Happy birthday' in person," he said. Still, missing another birthday was difficult for this Army dad who has dedicated 13 years of his life to the service.

"I have a job to do and she understands," he said. "I mean,

it definitely hurts, but I'm no different from the several other thousand Soldiers that are here away from their families."

So when Fortner is home he makes sure that he takes advantage of every moment.

On Raychel's second birthday they had a four-day celebration, party after party - one with his family, another with his wife's family, one with Raychel's friends and then another with his wife's extended family.

"Last year she made out like a bandit. That's for sure," Fortner said.

This year's deployment is Fortner's second trip to Iraq and this time around leaving wasn't as difficult, he said.

"It was a mixture of joy and pain," Fortner said. "Last time I deployed they had to drop me off and they weren't able to spend any time with me because I deployed later."

This time, Fortner and his family showed up at the gym and he got to spend several hours with them before heading to the airport.

"[The extra family time]

was all about getting the girls to understand 'Daddy's going away,' and after I walked out of the gym it would be awhile before they'd see me again."

Although he got to spend more time with his family, Fortner said, "You'll always miss home when you're away and having to say good-bye was gut wrenching."

Fortner said that as they were saying their final good-byes his eldest daughter, 4-year-old Saara, had her arms wrapped around his neck tightly and would not have let go if it weren't for her grandfather being present.

When deployment orders became official, missing another birthday was out of the question, so the Fortners threw an early birthday party in October for little Raychel.

Being away had Fortner missing the simple things of being home.

"I miss the messy rooms. I miss getting up in the middle of the night to screaming children," Fortner said. "Most kids, when you put them to bed at night want water, something to eat. 'I want this,' 'I gotta go potty,' 'I gotta do this,' but with my two, it's 'Daddy, I want to snuggle with you.' You can't imagine how many hot meals over here I'd trade for just five minutes of snuggle time with those two girls."

Whether trading hot meals or waiting to pin on rank, Fortner would do anything for a bit of quality time with the sister 'Hurricane Duo,' he said.

As he finally pinned on the rank of Sgt. 1st Class onto his patrol cap he said that he'd been waiting to wear the rank for 27 days.

With his family taking part, it was certainly worth the wait.



(Photo by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. 1st Class Rex Fortner, a retention noncommissioned officer with Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division, talks to his family via a video teleconference call at division headquarters on Camp Liberty, Iraq, Nov. 27.